Tungabhadra Steel Products Ltd., British India Corporation, HMT Machine Tools Ltd., Central Inland Water Transport Corporation and Tyre Corporation of India Ltd. have been identified by the Government for revival through joint ventures. In addition, Government have also approved other merger/amalgamation like Indian Iron & Steel Company Ltd. (IISCO) with SAIL, subsidiaries of NTC Ltd. with their holding company and Indian Airlines Ltd. with Air India Ltd.

Extension of pipelines gas connections in the country

806. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set any target for extending pipelines gas connections in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating how much of financial assistance is required and how it will be fulfilled for providing piped gas connections in the country;

(c) whether any objections have been raised by the present dealers and distributers of IOC, IBP, HPCL and BPCL; and

(d) if so, what are their objections towards Government's decision for extending piped gas-line in the country and Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) No such target has been fixed. The extension of pipeline gas connections in various parts of the country is linked with availability of gas, commissioning of necessary infrastructure and economic viability. Government of India does not allocate funds for providing piped gas connections in the country. Entities allocate and spend funds according to the plans of their projects.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The LPG distributors, appointed by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), have not raised any objection. However, All India LPG Distributors Federation (AILPGDF) has submitted a representation for rehabilitation of pipe gas affected distributors which, *inter alia*, requested for resitement of distributorships to alternative areas where pipeline network expansion is in progress. OMCs have reported that they have noted the position about the expansion of piped gas network while planning new LPG distributorships in the country.

Pricing of gas imported from Iran

807. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline;

(b) whether it is a fact that there are some differences with Iran or pricing method of Gas as well as conflicts with Pakistan on gas transport tariff;

(c) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto; and

(d) what strategy Government would like to take for getting enough natural gas for the future need?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) India has been pursuing the import of natural gas

from Iran through the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) transnational gas pipeline. Various important issues are under discussion amongst the participating countries.

Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests as also to avoid any future problems in the successful operation of the project.

(d) Government of India has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to augment gas supplies and bridge the gap between supply and demand for the domestic market. These cover:—

(a) Intensification of domestic exploration and production activities;

(b) Exploitation of unconventional sources, like Coal Bed Methane (CBM);

(c) Underground Coal Gasification;

(d) Implementation of Natural Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP) for evaluation of hydrate resources and their possible commercial exploitation;

(e) LNG Imports; and

(f) Gas sourcing through transnational gas pipelines.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Gas Pipeline

808. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is planning to join Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Asian Development Bank has also agreed to India's joining the proejct;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what is the outcome of the discussions held in this regard in Islamabad between 28th and 29th October, 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) The Government of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan have proposed a transnational gas pipeline to exploit the available gas reserves in Turkmenistan. They designated ADB as the lead development partner. ADB had carried out a study and approached India for participating in the project. An Indian delegation led by Hon'ble Shri Dinsha Patel, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas visited Ashgabat, Turkmenistan to participate in the 9th Steering Committee Meeting of the countries participating in Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) Gas Pipeline Project held on February 14-15, 2006 as an 'Observer'. The Steering Committee invited India to become an official member of the project. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas brought the matter before the Cabinet in May, 2006 after inter-Ministerial discussions. The Cabinet in the meeting held on 18th May 2006, accorded an 'in principle' approval to the proposal for India joining the TAP project.The decision of the Government of India to join Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project as an official member was conveyed to ADB in June, 2006. ADB circulated the revised draft Framework Agreement amongst the participating countries for their comments after the first meeting to Technical Working Group held in April, 2007 for inclusion of India as an official member of the project.